

and the universe said

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and the universe said

by [youreyeslookliketheocean](#)

Summary

Out there was the world he'd sought to discover, and it was incredible. But inside the quiet stability of a half-built house, enveloped in the first moment of peace Phil had gotten since Tommy hatched, was something just as beautiful.

Notes

this work is part of the [patience au](#) series, but can stand on its own :))

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

And the player began a new dream. And the player dreamed again, dreamed better.

- Minecraft End Poem

Phil was never supposed to have hatchlings. He found out when he was eighteen, from a village healer, and spent approximately two days mourning before moving on with his life.

Maybe, at the time, his reaction had seemed a little underwhelming. He knew his aunt had fretted over it, thinking he was in some severe state of denial. His father hadn't openly expressed his worry like she had, but Phil snuck down from the loft, once, to find him in tears at the kitchen table, looking over old baby books from Phil's childhood and whispering, "He's never going to have any of this, is he?" to his aunt. Phil had slipped deftly away, his presence going entirely unnoticed by his two guardians, but the memory of the tears in his father's eyes stuck with him.

Nevertheless, even though his aunt was appalled, and his father secretly grieving, Phil not being able to have hatchlings didn't really affect him much. Not at eighteen. Not at nineteen. Not at twenty. In fact, it set him free.

At twenty, he decided he was tired of staying in one place. He'd been itching to get out and actually see the world for years, so, without anything keeping him tied to the village he'd grown up in, he packed his bags and told his father he was leaving. He'd expected resistance. He'd expected his father to tear up, to argue, to carefully explain to him that it had only been eight years since his mom died, and he just wasn't ready to lose another bird from their already dwindling nest.

Instead, standing in their softly glowing kitchen at a quarter to midnight, his father smiled and put a warm hand to his shoulder.

"You go see the world, son," he'd whispered, soft and undoubtedly proud. *"She'd want you to."*

Phil left the next morning, with the sun, and didn't look back.

The first time he felt the gap, he was twenty-five and renting a room in the house of some other elytrians living in New River Valley. It was during dinner, and they'd all been seated around the long, rectangular table built to accommodate guests and children. Phil had been sitting beside a young avian girl named Hannah, listening to her ramble on and on about the

little fairy house she'd built down by the river that morning, when his stomach did a little flip and his heart clenched.

"And then I found some mud, and plastered it to the bottom so it would stick together," Hannah had continued, oblivious to Phil's sudden pain, *"and it worked! So, after I built the roof, I put snails inside it. To test and make sure it was safe for fairies. Only, the snails kept trying to get out, so then I realized I probably needed a door, and—"*

There was a pit in Phil's chest, a cavity, rapidly widening. It ached. But he smiled and nodded along.

"Sure. Of course, every home needs a door," he'd said.

"No. Every home needs people in it, silly," Hannah replied with the wisdom only a five-year-old could possess.

At twenty-five, Phil felt the empty pit in his chest and, for the first time, wondered what it would feel like to settle down.

He left that house a couple weeks later, waving a cheerful goodbye to Hannah and her family, and continued on his journey to see the world. Sure, there was a hole in his chest, but it was small. If he didn't think about it, if he kept himself distracted with packing and picking up and flying and meeting new people and seeing new things, he could completely forget it was even there. And that's what he did. He stayed distracted, stayed traveling. He had some of the best years of his life, met some of the most incredible people.

And then, at age thirty-three, Phil stumbled across an avian egg.

The Enchanted Forest was not the ideal place for travelers. It spanned onward for miles, quite literally taking weeks to traverse, and was *infested* with mobs. Creepers, zombies, spiders the size of Phil's old house—not to mention the snakes and venomous tree-frogs, and the poisoned mushrooms and holly bushes that Phil had to take care not to accidentally eat.

Thankfully, he had wings. They allowed him to fly most of the way over the forest, only stopping for a few hours at a time to eat, wash up, sleep, or drink. There were water jugs strapped to the bag he carried with him, but he didn't like filling them on long flying days. They weighed him down and made the travel slower. So he stopped at various streams and rivers instead, using the knowledge he'd acquired of where to find clean water and how to prepare it to help him stay hydrated.

It was on one of those landings—one of those searches for fresh water and food—that Phil stumbled across the egg. Round and tinged a slight, creamy color—like whipped buttercream—the egg’s head just barely jutted above the ocean of whispering, summer-green grass surrounding it. Phil nearly missed it as he passed, eyes skimming over it once before snapping back, his brain coming to terms with what he’d just seen.

There was an avian egg in the middle of the clearing. A bird. A *baby*.

Abandoned avian eggs were not uncommon. Most elytrians tended to lay about one egg a month, which didn’t seem like much until those eggs turned to *children*. Living, breathing children who demanded time and patience and food and love that, sometimes, some elytrians just didn’t have to give them. It was an unfortunate reality, but one that had never really bothered Phil before because it was *normal*.

Phil took one look at that avian egg, and the empty pit in his chest caved.

He crossed the clearing and crouched down, examining the bright, golden sheen the sun reflected across the egg’s shell. This egg was *small*. Barely half the size of Phil’s forearm. It was caked with dried mud at the bottom, like someone had dropped it in a puddle while carrying it here. Or maybe it had just been sitting here so long that, at some point, it’d rained and sunken into the dirt. Either way, it had obviously been here for some time.

Phil carefully reached out and scooped the egg into his hands. It was warm to the touch, heated by the afternoon sun, and he sighed. That was good. Heat was good for baby avians. Their eggs needed to be kept warm, or they’d freeze to death.

He tucked the egg carefully into the crook of his elbow, like he would a real child, and stood up.

This was a *child*. An avian baby held in his arms. Sure, it hadn’t hatched yet, but it was in there. It was waiting. It—judging by the size of its egg—was about a week old, which didn’t seem like much time, but most avian eggs hatched soon after being laid. Anywhere from fifteen to twenty days was the norm.

What was Phil supposed to do?

He was still traveling. He was still seeing the world and meeting people and going on the adventures his eighteen-year-old self had always dreamed of.

But there was a pressure on his chest that lifted whenever he looked at the tiny egg, cradled in his hands. The gap was slowly, but surely, being filled by a steady warmth. An encroaching softness that wrapped around his heart and squeezed.

Phil could never quite explain why he’d decided to become a father, but he figured that feeling must have been part of it.

It'd been eighteen days, and his baby had still not hatched.

Phil sat, hunch-backed on the newly built Pube floor, as the egg in front of him laid utterly still and silent in the nest Phil had built it. It was mid-afternoon, and sticky yellow sunshine bled in from the balcony, coating the floor around him like honey and making the leftover wood dust from that day's house-construction shimmer. Phil had been working on the Pube for hours. His arms and back were stiff from hammering nails into the ceiling boards, and his wings itched from all the sawdust they'd collected. Yet, he couldn't find it in him to preen, or take a bath, or nap, or do anything besides sit and stare at his child. His child who should have hatched days ago. His child who was utterly still, and silent, and *oh prime what if it was dead?*

Phil's legs were exhausted, but he pressed himself up from the floor and began to pace for the fifth time.

What if he hadn't kept the egg warm enough? What if he'd kept it *too* warm? What if he'd accidentally jostled it too much on his way out of the Enchanted Forest? Or what if the loud construction had upset it? Or what if—

Phil groaned, and frustrated tears rose to his eyes as he turned back to look at the egg. It was so small. *So* small. What if this wasn't Phil's fault at all, and he'd just had the misfortune of falling in love with something that was not meant to last? It wouldn't be the first time. He'd already lost his mother, after all.

Phil walked closer, and squatted down next to the egg.

"Please," he whispered, eyes blurring as the egg continued to sit. "Please hatch. I don't want to travel anymore. I don't want to move. I don't want to keep living in houses that aren't home. I want this. I want you. I love you. *Please.*"

He covered face, sobbing, and that's when he heard it. Over the tears, over the wind whistling on the balcony, there was a tiny *crack*.

Phil had never witnessed an avian's hatch before. He'd never had siblings. But, on instinct alone, he knew that sound.

With wide eyes, he uncovered his face.

Thank prime. His baby was hatching.

Tommy was adorable. He was tiny and frail, limbs so small that, when Phil took him to some nearby healers for a post-hatch checkup, he was told that the baby actually hatched *early*, not late.

He imprinted on Phil quickly, easily—letting out tiny, bubbling chirps in response to his calls, and clinging to his chest with grippy fingers whenever Phil held him.

Tommy, for all intents and purposes in Phil's eyes, was perfect.

Except he would not shut up.

Phil's head snapped up, nearly smacking into the trapdoor he'd been *trying* to screw into place before Tommy's shrieks cut through his focus. Or, rather, his lack of focus. He'd been zoning out, he realized. His head was full of cotton as he tried to keep pushing after spending *hours* today keeping Tommy happy.

No. *No, no, no, no, no*. He'd *just* put him to sleep. Tommy had finally closed his eyes after spending nearly the entire day fussing, and Phil had spent a couple extra minutes bouncing him in his arms before placing him—*slowly, carefully, gently*—in their nest. He hadn't woken up, and Phil had let out the tiniest sigh of victory as he left to go finish working on his house.

Tommy screamed again, loud and distraught, like the whole world would end if Phil didn't come pick him up right then. So, with a regretful huff, Phil slid back down the ladder and crossed to floor to Tommy's room.

Tommy's room was more like a little corner. Phil had built it right beside the Pube's chest room, and it was only a few feet wide in every direction. But it was big enough to hold Phil's assortment of soft blankets and downy feathers, warm sweaters and sparkly trinkets. It was big enough to be their nest.

Phil pushed aside the makeshift curtain and ducked inside. Sure enough, Tommy was in the middle of the nest, wailing like he'd just had his leg chopped off.

"Aww, Little Bird," Phil cooed, and Tommy's cry broke off into hitched snuffles. Wide, teary, blue eyes cracked open to look up at him.

Phil scooped down and pulled Tommy to his chest. "What's the matter, mate, hm?"

Tommy just stretched, arms flying over his head as he yawned and then relaxed into Phil's hold. Phil chuckled.

"Won't give me a moment of peace, will you," he whispered tiredly.

He was exhausted. His arms ached from carting Tommy around all day, and his legs from pacing with him. It was late, and his eyelids had started dragging down the moment he placed a sleeping Tommy in the nest. All he'd wanted to do was curl up beside his son and pass out, but he had a house to finish. Tommy was only a few weeks old, but he wouldn't stay in that tiny nest forever. When he was older, he'd need a bigger space. Phil needed to work. Needed to get this done.

Tiny fingers curled around Phil's robe, weakly yanking him closer, and Phil sighed.

There was no way he was going to be able to keep doing this. Tommy had been screeching all day, every time he tried to leave him to get things done. Phil didn't know who to blame—

himself for letting Tommy be clingy, or Tommy's imprint instincts that probably hated when Phil left. Either way, he hadn't gotten a moment's rest all day. Nor yesterday. Nor the day before that. Nor—

Tommy shuddered, and Phil tucked him closer to his chest as he backed out of the nest. There was a rocking chair he'd set up in the corner of the living room, just a few days before Tommy hatched, so he went to it and sat down with Tommy squeezed tight in his lap.

"I'm sorry," Phil whispered, and was surprised to feel the start of overtired tears stinging his eyes. "I'm sorry, I know you hate it when I leave, I just— The house isn't finished yet, and I— I want you to have a home. A real home. With your own bedroom and windows and garden and..."

Tommy blinked his eyes open for just a millisecond before they slid shut again, but it was enough time for Phil to catch the expression in them. The utter love and adoration directed up at him before the little avian drifted back to sleep.

Phil had wanted many things in his life. He'd wanted to fly first, which he accomplished at six years old. Then he'd wanted his mom back, and to travel, and for his aunt to stop pestering him about leaving the door unlocked when he came back past midnight, and to help people as he flew all around the world, and *never once* had he wanted a child. Never once until he was twenty-five and that pit opened in him. The home sized pit. The one that'd seen Tommy's egg and instantly melted. Phil had wanted so many things, dreamed so many dreams.

All the little avian in his lap wanted was him.

It was insane. It was something twenty-year-old Phil never could have imagined. There he sat in a house he'd built all by himself, with a baby in his lap that was his, and all that child wanted was him. All that child needed to stop fussing was Phil's patience, and Phil's warmth, and Phil's love.

Tommy was completely and utterly passed out on his chest, so Phil relaxed back, rocking the chair back and forth as he glanced toward the open balcony. Out there was the world he'd sought to discover, and it was incredible. But inside the quiet stability of a half-built house, enveloped in the first moment of peace Phil had gotten since Tommy hatched, was something just as beautiful.

End Notes

thanks for reading!

comments and kudos are always appreciated <3

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